

MAUI CRISPS - MANUFACTURING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

ABOUT MAUI CRISPS. Maui Crisps was founded in September 2014 by Blaine and Beth Apo. This husband and wife team was trying to perfect a recipe for "pipikaula", a Hawaiian version of beef jerky, when they accidentally created a new snack altogether—Maui Crisps. These slices of USDA Choice beef are sliced paper-thin, dehydrated until perfectly crisp and seasoned with a variety of local flavors.

Soon Maui Crisps were selling out at the convenience store they managed, and they knew that they had created a truly special, unique and protein-packed snack. The demand was so great that they quickly had to upgrade from their small gas station kitchen and into a professional grade manufacturing plant.

THE CHALLENGE. The demand for Maui Crisps soon outpaced the quantity Blaine and Beth Apo were able to produce. They knew that in order to grow this business they would need to upgrade to a larger facility and purchase specialty equipment to produce a more uniform product at a faster speed. They understood that setting up a professional production line is no small task and expenses can quickly add up.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Maui Crisps management had previously met a project manager from Innovate Hawaii, part of the MEP National Network™, and decided to reach out when they were ready to expand their operation. Innovate Hawaii was able to help secure a Manufacturing Assistance Program (MAP) Grant for \$80,000, which enabled Maui Crisps to purchase the equipment they needed to streamline and increase production.

Innovate Hawaii provided Maui Crisps with the opportunity to showcase their product at the Made in Hawaii festival in 2017 and 2018. The event provided Maui Crisps management with essential customer market validation, insight into popular product flavors and price point testing. This festival offered Maui Crisps a chance to share their unique and highly sought-after snack with both local and international buyers.

"The Innovate Hawaii team has been easy to work with. They have been able to provide us with grant information, a variety of professional business experts and valuable training. I would highly recommend Innovate Hawaii to anyone interested in expanding their current manufacturing operations."

-Blaine Apo, Founder & President

RESULTS



In Jan. **2018** produced 5,000 bags/month and in Jan. 2019 doubled production to 10,000 bags/month.



Plans on scaling production up to **30,000** bags/month, which would be a 300% increase this year.



Begin exporting their products to the continental U.S, Canada, Japan and New Zealand in **2019**.

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